

2
APR 21 1967

Approved For Release 2005/01/12 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000400220041-2

Pers. Mc Hill, Ralph
CIA 2-04.2 Students
Orig. Peace Corps

U.S. Masochism

African Notes—Here in faraway Africa I have learned something about Americans.

It is that we are masochists or flagellants. We like to rub salt into our own wounds, or to scratch our wounds, or to scourge ourselves. The CIA story of our having subsidized some American students to attend Communist sponsored youth movements in Europe is illustrative of this point.

When the story broke in American newspapers there was an almost spontaneous masochistic reaction. We were morally outraged. There was a nationwide exhibition of self-scourging, of scratching our wounds. There was almost universal exhibitionism of this sort of reaction editorially and personally.



Ralph McGill

But in West Africa and East Africa, I find the student story is being taken quite calmly. In Kenya there was an inquiry at question time in parliament asking the government if an indication of using the Peace Corps as "spies" had been discovered. The ministry for internal affairs reported very quietly but firmly that there had been no indication at all of such activity.

Kenyans seem to understand that while not all Peace Corps youth are successes, most of them are, indeed, idealists committed to service from which they obtain satisfaction and inner rewards. Also, it is a bit preposterous to suggest that Peace Corps workers in a village helping dig irrigation ditches, teaching school, or working in some other form of helping people could see anything to "spy" upon that would damage the nation's security.

The reaction, therefore, as of this writing, is that the Africans are laughing at our masochistic self-flagellation for doing what all other nations did who sent delegates to the European Communist-called youth conferences. They

also wonder why a powerful, rich nation should have been so clumsy about it.

Being far away from home gives one an opportunity to look homeward. It is possible to see that our system of checks and balances sometimes produces a temporary weakness. The CIA story is an example. Every nation has the equivalent of the CIA. At home the CIA presently is being rebuked and investigated. There are congressional demands for its control.

The facts seem to be that the CIA is in its present predicament because of congressional failure and the executive department's original decision during the Eisenhower administration to find an alternative to congressional action.

The Joe McCarthy illness still is in our national bloodstream. In the 1950s any public support for sending students to Communist youth congresses to counter other young Americans who were being sent there by far-left organizations in America would have been impossible.

It was a sound, sensible idea. But because McCarthy would have made a Roman circus of throwing all involved to the lions in one of his highly demagogic scenes, we could not use a direct method. Private business, which ordinarily would have provided money, was also afraid of the McCarthy smear machine.

So President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles used the CIA. The CIA, having once been so used—in areas it would not itself have chosen to enter—was later employed in similar situations. Blame cannot fairly be attached to the CIA. The real American problem, or question, is why we did not stop the abuse long ago.

At any rate, the CIA story apparently has done no great harm. It allowed the compulsive critics of the United States to suggest that the Peace Corps and other U.S. programs are suspect. But so far no serious reaction has developed. Japan and Denmark, for example, also have the equivalent of Peace Corps in several African countries.

We should stop indulging in moral self-flagellation and act forthrightly.